LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Graduation is a time to take stock of both achievements and debts. I take immense pleasure in congratulating our graduates, including six who will pursue doctoral degrees at New York University, University of Michigan (2), Notre Dame University, Boston University, and Rutgers University. In addition, five graduates will first pursue master's degrees. Please see below for details about the achievements of both our graduates and the ongoing Fellows. I know I can speak for the Fellows in saying that their successes would not have been possible without the financial support and comradeship of the fellowship community, hours of mentoring from faculty mentors, and the faith and encouragement of family and friends. They have thrived not just because of their hard work, but also because City College invested in them. Heartfelt thanks to our administration and to the many dedicated and generous faculty mentors. I am confident that the Fellows’ future achievements will make the College proud.

Congratulations and good luck!

Thanks are also due to faculty members who participated in fellowship workshops during the spring semester. Professors Adrienne Petty (History) and Stanley Tangaraj (Anthropology) inspired the Fellows to consider why, when, and how to use non-traditional “archives,” including participant observation and oral history. We appreciated the contributions of Professors Ruth Stark (Chemistry) and Mark Steinberg (Chemistry) who spoke from their many years of experience on how to build productive mentoring relationships. At our workshop on balancing life and career, the Fellows were reassured that academics can indeed have a life; they valued the candid but encouraging remarks of Professor Carlos Ribo (Foreign Languages) and Lisa Figueroa Jahn (CCNY MMUF alumna and PhD student in Anthropology, CUNY Graduate Center).

The spring semester culminated in the 13th annual City College Fellowship Research Conference, which brought Fellows together to share their research across the disciplines. The sophistication of the research and the professionalism of the Fellows were on full display; equally important, the wonderful spirit of collegiality, respect, and support among the Fellows served as an inspiration for both presenters and audience members. (See the program below). We were honored to welcome CCNY alumna Dr. Rafia Zafar (Professor of English, Washington University) to give the keynote luncheon speech. Through her example and her words, she encouraged the Fellows to believe that there is room for them in academia as well as important work for them to do.

Last but not least, congratulations to the six new Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellows and the six new City College Fellows. We anticipate that your diverse backgrounds and interests will enrich our community, sustaining the intellectual excitement and camaraderie that help to foster the Fellows’ success. Welcome!

Susan Besse

NEW FELLOWS

It is with great pleasure that we announce and welcome the six new City College Fellows and six new Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellows.

The new City College Fellows are:

Babatunde Alade  Mathematics/Economics
Richard [Gray] Huffman  Physics
Ofir Klein  History
Timothy McGhee  Black Studies
Azmain Nisak  Physics
Edgar Olmeda  History

The new Mellon Mays Fellows are:

Dilenny Cisnero  History
Christopher Colon  Sociology
Chayanne Marcano  Anthropology
Bilha Njuguna  English
Vannessa Velez  History
Rebecca Wellington  Philosophy

ACHIEVEMENTS

Fellows’ Activities and Awards 2014 - 2015

Graduating Seniors

Miriam Abdullah (English) graduated January 2015 magna cum laude with English Honors. She held the Kaye Scholarship and presented a paper at the 2015 NY Regional MMUF conference at Barnard College. She will enter CUNY Graduate Center’s MA in Middle East Studies fall 2015.

Shaila Bora (Philosophy) graduated June 2015 summa cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa. Shaila was presented the Philosophy Department’s Sperling Award for Best Graduating Senior. She will pursue a MA in Philosophy at Georgia State University starting fall 2015.

Daphne Chang (Biology) graduated January 2015 magna cum laude.

Gabriella Clemente (Mathematics) graduated June 2015. Her article “Graphs with minimal well-covered dimension,” was published in Rose-Hulman Undergraduate Mathematics Journal 15:2 (2014). She presented this paper at the 2015 NY Regional MMUF conference at
Barnard College; in addition, she presented her research at the Nebraska Conference for Undergraduate Women in Mathematics (Lincoln, Nebraska) and at the Joint Mathematics Meetings (San Antonio, Texas). She received the Mathematics Department’s Belden Medal, in recognition of outstanding performance in the advanced calculus sequence. She will enter Notre Dame University’s PhD program in Mathematics fall 2015. Beforehand, she will participate in Notre Dame’s 2015 NSF-GRFP Summer Support Series, which helps students prepare fellowship and grant proposals.

Tameekia Imani Cooper (English) graduated June 2015 magna cum laude with English Honors and Phi Beta Kappa. Imani was presented the English Department’s Stark Award for Essay in Literature as well as the Division of Humanities and the Arts’ Sydney and Helen Jacoff Scholarship for graduate study; she also held the Kaye Scholarship. She presented a paper on a panel at the New York African Studies Association’s (NYASA) 40th annual conference in Albany. She will enter University of Michigan’s PhD in Comparative Literature & Translation Studies fall 2015.

Nadia Hossain (History) graduated June 2015 magna cum laude. She was presented the History Department’s J. Selwyn Schapiro History Prize and held the Kaye Scholarship.

Maria Gavrutenko (Biology) graduated June 2015 summa cum laude. Maria was awarded: the Division of Science’s Bernard Levine Scholarship; the Biology Department’s Professor William Stratford Prize, for proficiency in zoological research and coursework; and the Biology Department’s Ward Medal, for best overall record in Biology coursework. She presented her research at the CCNY Biology Department’s Honors Research Conference. She will enter CCNY’s MS program in Biology fall 2015 and plans to pursue a PhD in Ecology or Environmental/Conservation Biology upon completing her MS.

Jeffrey Kasper (Urban Studies) graduated January 2015 magna cum laude and held the Kaye Scholarship. He will enter Queens College, CUNY’s MFA program in Social Practice Art fall 2015.

Angelo Laine (Psychology) graduated June 2015 magna cum laude with Psychology Honors. He was a Kitch Foundation Scholar and was awarded the Psychology Department’s Kenneth B. Clark Award for Scholarship or Community Service Related to Social Justice. He was also awarded from Student Support Services Program (SSSP) an Academic Excellence Award and The Charlotte and Arthur Zitrin Peer Mentor Award. He plans to enter a PhD program in clinical or counseling psychology fall 2016.

Tamra Lepro (English) graduated June 2015 summa cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa. She was awarded the English Department’s Isaacs Scholarship, Edward C. and Ruth P. Mack Graduate Fellowship, Esther Unger Poetry Prize, and the Leon/Ward Prize for a graduating senior demonstrating the highest scholarship in English. From the Division of Humanities and the Arts, Tamra held the Kaye Scholarship and was awarded the Sydney and Helen Jacoff Scholarship for graduate study. She will enter Rutgers University’s PhD program in English fall 2015.

Seth Rodriguez (History) graduated June 2015 cum laude.

Samina Sirajuddowla (History) graduated June 2015 summa cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa. She held the Kaye Scholarship and received the History Department’s Arthur Tiedemann Award and Charles T. Cromwell Award. She presented a paper at Independent University, “Globalization and Identity” and a poster at CUNY Graduate Symposium. Samina is currently working on the “Bengal Memory Podcast,” a podcast series that aims to build a rigorous archive of oral autobiographical testimonies for major historical events in Bengal. She plans to apply to PhD programs in History for fall 2016 entry.

Chun Biao Wang (Mathematics) graduated June 2015 magna cum laude. He will enter Boston University’s PhD program in Economics fall 2016 after spending a year working for MDRC, a social policy research organization.

Three Alumni Fellows also gained admission to graduate programs:

Rachel Ansong (BA, 2014), MFA, Creative Writing, SUNY Stony Brook
Emily Graham (BA, 2014), PhD, History NYU (for a joint JD/PhD degree)
Rashun Miles (BA, 2012), PhD, History/Anthropology, University of Michigan

Continuing Fellows:

Eseosa Aiwerioghene (Biochemistry) is a Ronald E. McNair Post Baccalaureate Fellow and a MARC Fellow. Eseosa is the recipient of the Charlotte and Arthur Zitrin Peer Mentor Award, Ephraim and Libby Banks Memorial Scholarship, and Gerald Brenner Scholarship. He presented a poster at the 2014 Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students in San Antonio, Texas, and a paper at the 2015 American Chemical Society’s Annual Undergraduate Research Symposium at QC, CUNY.

Orubba Almansouri (English) holds the Kaye Scholarship. She presented three papers at: the New York African Studies Association’s (NYASA) 40th annual conference in Albany; the 2015 NY Regional MMUF conference at Barnard College; and the 2015 Pipeline Research Conference at the CUNY Graduate Center.

Keevin Brown (Black Studies). The SSSP (Student Support Services Program) honored Keevin with an award for academic achievement.

Dilenny Cisnero (History) holds the Kaye Scholarship and was awarded the History Department’s Sidney Ditzion Award for an Outstanding Paper in Social History.

Luthfunnahar [Dina] Dewan (Psychology) pre-
presented her research at the 43rd Annual Hunter College Psychology Research Convention and at The Colin Powell School Annual Undergraduate Research Conference.

Yasmine [Mina] El Gheur (Art History) holds the Kaye Scholarship and is an Art History Ambassador for the College. During fall 2014, she was Permissions and Copyright Intern at the Jewish Museum and also received the Connor Service Learning Stipend. She was awarded the French Language Certificate of Achievement from the Foreign Languages Department; and her article “Holy Wars: Divine Rights and Actions,” appeared in Shiv’im Panim, III (2014).

Karim Elhaies (History) holds the Kaye Scholarship and also received the Kitch Foundation Scholarship. He was invited to participate in the Middle East Studies Association (MESA)’s Undergraduate Research Workshop.

FALL 2015 SCHEDULE

* Required attendance for all Fellows.

Please see the “Guide” for other events required for Fellows at different stages.

All events begin at 12:30 in 6/309, and lunch is served, unless otherwise noted.

TH Sep 3: Orientation for all new City College Fellows and Mellon Mays Fellows

FRI Sep 4: *Fellowships Dinner (begins at 6:30 PM in NAC 6/316)

TH Sep 10: DUE: Summer reports (for all who received CCFELL & MMUF summer 2015 funding)

TH Sep 17: *Round-table: Summer Research Experiences

TH Sep 24: Round-table: Race, Class and Gender in the Academy

Wed Sep 30: DUE: Seniors applying to grad school submit drafts of statements of purpose to Renee Philippi for Writing the Statement of Purpose Workshop.

TH Oct 8: Workshop: Writing the Statement of Purpose

TH Oct 15: Workshop: Financing your Education and Research


TH Oct 29: Round-table: Mentoring

TU Nov 10 in NAC 6/316: Recruitment meeting for prospective Fellows

TH Nov 12: Workshop: Building Academic Skills

TH Nov 19: Workshop: Mental Health

TU Dec 1: DUE: Applications for City College Fellowship

GRE PREP COURSE OPTIONS

Just a reminder that the City College Fellowships Program will cover the cost of GRE Prep for all Fellows (up to $650), whether you choose to enroll in any Kaplan GRE-prep course (at the CCNY discounted fee) or any GRE online tutorial (such as Magoosh). Fellows may also receive reimbursement for the purchase of any GRE prep materials, up to a total of $650 for all GRE prep course fees and materials. If you would like to take the Kaplan course, you MUST apply for the CCNY discount. To receive the CCNY half-price discount, you must:

• Enroll individually by contacting Kaplan directly (1-800-KAPTEST = 1-800-527 8378)

• Provide Kaplan with your CCNY email address and copy of CCNY ID.

• At time of enrollment, students must be prepared to pay at least 1/3 of the final cost (after the discount).

You must obtain approval from Renee (RMPhilippi@ccny.cuny.edu) before registering for any of the courses mentioned above or before purchasing GRE prep materials.

CHECK PROCEDURE

Since the implementation of the CUNY First system, CUNY mails all fellowship stipend checks directly to Fellows. (Fellows can no longer pick up these checks at the CCNY Bursar’s Office.) Fellows must complete and submit a “Learning Agreement” each semester before Renee submits a disbursement form; late submission of the “Learning Agreement” can delay payment of the stipend to the following semester. All other checks (reimbursement for travel or GRE prep, summer monies, etc.) should be picked up in the Bursar’s office, A103. (Note: you must complete a W9 form each year in order to have expenses reimbursed.) It takes approximately four to six weeks to receive a check once Renee submits a disbursement form. If you have any questions about the procedure, please ask Renee Philippi.

If you have any questions regarding your check, once Renee has processed the disbursement form, you MUST speak with Ms. Martinez and/or her staff in the General Scholarship Office, in Admissions, room 101. Renee does not have access to information regarding checks!
Joel Engelman (Psychology) was awarded the Psychology Department’s Rose Biller Scholarship and Footstep Scholarship. The SSPP (Student Support Services Program) honored Joel with an award for academic achievement.

Ivette Gomez (English) was awarded the Kaye Scholarship.

Alycia Hall (History) was awarded the History Department’s Oscar Lloyd Meyerson Medal for excellency in History; she also received a CUNY study abroad scholarship (SIROCS).

Zachary Hayworth (English) is an Isaacs Scholar.


Ivana Lazaroska (Political Science/History) holds the Kaye Scholarship.

Lukas Lindwasser (Physics) was awarded the Physics Department’s 2015 Shared Tiersten Award for best work in classical mechanics class, and a CCNY Alumni Association Scholarship for academic performance.

Wendyliz Martinez (English/Black Studies) presented a paper at the New York African Studies Association’s (NYASA) 40th annual conference in Albany as well as at the 2015 NY Regional MMUF conference at Barnard College. She also participated as a panelist on the Freedom Summer Panel hosted by the National Council of Negro Women.

Conor McGlone (English) holds the Kaye Scholarship and attended the National Conference for Undergraduate Research (NCUR) in Spokane, WA to present his paper, “Language and Identity in Hamlet.”

Sophia Monegro (English) holds the Kaye Scholarship and was awarded the English Department’s Paul Roberts Memorial Scholarship. She also received a CUNY study abroad scholarship (SIROCS). She presented her research at the New York African Studies Association’s (NYASA) 40th annual conference in Albany, the 2015 NY Regional MMUF conference at Barnard College, and the Latino Literature Conference at John Jay College (CUNY).

Bilha Njgunu (English) holds the Kaye Scholarship and the Weston Scholarship.

Seyed [Ali] Noori (Philosophy) holds the Kaye Scholarship. He was awarded: the CUNY BA Thomas W. Smith Fellowship; the City College Presidential Study Abroad Scholarship; and a Certificate of Achievement from the Department of Foreign Languages.

Joel Sati (Philosophy) was awarded the Philosophy Department’s Philosophy of Law Prize.

Sara Sewied (Psychology) was awarded the Charlotte and Arthur Zitrin Peer Mentor Award. She presented her research at the Montreal Bilingual Brain Initiative Symposium, the CUNY Pipeline Research Conference, and the CUNY Student Research Day.

Lediona Shahollari (History) was awarded the History Department’s Arthur Tiedemann Award.

Vannessa Velez (History) holds the Kaye Scholarship.

Rebecca Wellington (Philosophy) holds the Kaye Scholarship.

Alexandra [Sasha] Whittaker (Art History) was awarded the Macaulay Honors College’s Lisa Goldberg/Revson Scholarship and the Horace W. Goldsmith Scholarship. She was also awarded the CCNY Art Department’s Conor Study Abroad Fellowship.

Timothy [Gage] Williams (Philosophy) holds the Kaye Scholarship.

The Fellowship Program is pleased to be sponsoring (in part or fully), the following Fellows in their summer research and academic pursuits:

Eseosa Aiweriohoene (Biochemistry) with support of MARC (Maximizing Access to Research Careers), is conducting research in the laboratory of his mentor, Prof. Ruth Stark (Chemistry).

Orubba Almansouri (English) is conducting independent research in New York under the guidance of her mentor, Prof. Amr Kamal (Foreign Languages).

Keevin Brown (Black Studies) declined acceptance to CUNY Pipeline Fellowship Program to participate in MURAP (Moore Undergraduate Research Apprentice Program) at the University of North Carolina.

Dilenny Cisnero (History) is participating in the University of Chicago’s MMUF SRTP (Summer Research Training Program).

Christopher Colon (Sociology) is participating in the University of Chicago’s MMUF SRTP (Summer Research Training Program).

Luthfunnahar [Dina] Dewan (Psychology) is participating in the CUNY Graduate Center’s Pipeline Fellowship Program and also conducting research under the direction of her mentor, Prof. Timothy Ellmore (Psychology).


Karim Elhaies (History) won acceptance to the CCNY-Stanford Summer Exchange Research Program for humanities majors; he will also participate in the 2015 Michigan Humanities Emerging Research Scholars (MICHHERS) Program.

Joel Engelman (Psychology) will pursue research under the guidance of his mentor, Prof. Glen
Milstein (Psychology).
Alycia Hall (History) will participate in the 2015 Michigan Humanities Emerging Research Scholars (MICHHERS) Program, after which she will travel to Jamaica to conduct independent archival research under the direction of her mentor, Prof. Susan Besse (History).
Zachary Hayworth (English) will travel to Paris to use archival materials at the Goethe-Schiller Archive; he will also attend the Sorbonne’s intensive summer intermediate French language program.
Md Kabir (Chemistry) will pursue laboratory research under the direction of his mentor, Prof. Mark Steinberg (Chemistry).
Ivana Lazaroska (Political Science/History) will travel to Madison, Wisconsin to use archival materials at the University of Wisconsin. She also won acceptance to the CCNY-Stanford Summer Exchange Research Program for humanities majors.

THIRTEENTH ANNUAL CITY COLLEGE FELLOWSHIPS RESEARCH CONFERENCE
May 1, 2015

Panel I  9:15 - 10:30
Conor McGlone, Language and Identity in Hamlet
Zachary Hayworth, “Grenzen der Darstellbarkeit”: Representation, logos, and aesthetic education in Schiller and Novalis
Samina Sirajuddowla, Rethinking Nationalism in Bengal: Anticolonialism in the Literary Corpus of Kazi Nazrul Islam, 1920 -1930

Panel II  10:45 - 12:15
Gabriella Clemente, Graphs with minimal well-covered dimension
Chun Biao Wang, Using High Frequency Stock Price Data to Test and Compare the Efficiencies of Chinese and U.S. Stock Markets
Luthfunnahar (Dina) Dewan, Exploring Working Memory Capacity for Complex Visual Scenes
Sara Seweid, The Effects of Bilingualism on Executive Control Functions in Auditory Selective Attention
Maria Gavrutenko, Conservation assessment for an endemic Malagasy rodent, Gymnuromys roberti (Family Nesomyidae), using ecological niche models and forest cover data

Luncheon  12:15 - 1:45
Keynote Address: Dr. Rafia Zafar, My Life in Research: The Harlem Renaissance, Black Writers of the 19th Century, and African American Foodways
Presentation of medals to graduating seniors

Panel III  2:00 - 3:30
Tamra Lepro, “To be as manly as I possibly could:” James Boswell and the Performance of the Soldier
Orubba Almansouri, Structuring Literature: Yemeni Women’s Path to Social Criticism
Yesmina ElGheur, The Voyeur and the Harem: A Feminist Perspective
Sophia Monegro, Ambivalent Steps Toward Decolonizing the Mind in Julia Alvarez’s How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents
Asha Whale, Speaking Our Oppression: Popular Television Representations of Black Women Confront the Mammy and Jezebel Stereotypes

Panel IV  3:45 - 5:00
Jerry Guillaume, The Whig Origins of the Pennsylvania and Massachusetts Constitutions
Jose Benjamin, Private Military Contractors & State Contracting Structures
Shaila Bora, Community as a Plural Agent
Joel Sati, Examining the Claims of Undocumented Immigrants Supposing a Just Immigration System
Chayanne Marcano (Anthropology) is participating in the University of Chicago’s MMUF SRTP (Summer Research Training Program).

Wendyliz Martinez (English/Black Studies) is participating in the CUNY Graduate Center’s Pipeline Fellowship Program.

Conor McClone (English) won acceptance to the CCNY-Stanford Summer Exchange Research Program for humanities majors.

Sophia Monegro (English) won acceptance to the CCNY-Stanford Summer Exchange Research Program for humanities majors.

Bilha Njuguna (English) is participating in the CUNY Graduate Center’s Pipeline Fellowship Program; she will also travel to London to conduct independent archival research in the British Library.

Seyed [Ali] Noori (Philosophy) is participating in the CUNY Graduate Center’s Pipeline Fellowship Program.

Jonathan Perlow (Psychology) is pursuing laboratory research under the direction of his mentor, Prof. Robert Melara.

Jose Ramirez (History) is participating in the CUNY Graduate Center’s Pipeline Fellowship Program.

Joel Sati (Philosophy) will attend the Summer Institute for Diversity in Philosophy at Rutgers University; he deferred until summer 2016 the invitation to participate in MIT’s Philosophy in an Inclusive Key Summer Institute (PIKSI).

Sara Sewied (Psychology) is pursuing laboratory research under the direction of her mentor, Prof. Robert Melara.

Lediona Shahollari (History) will travel to Albania to pursue independent archival research under the direction of her mentor, Prof. Emily Greble (History).

Vannessa Velez (History) is participating in the University of Chicago’s MMUF SRTP (Summer Research Training Program).

Rebecca Wellington (Philosophy) won acceptance to the CCNY-Stanford Summer Exchange Research Program for humanities majors.

Asha Whale (History/BlackStudies), supported by the Jeannette K. Watson Fellowship, has a summer internship at the W. E. B. Du Bois Memorial Centre for Pan African Culture in Accra, Ghana.

Alexandra [Sasha] Whittaker (Art History) won a summer internship at the Whitney Museum.

Timothy [Gage] Williams (Philosophy) will pursue intensive foreign language study in French at the CUNY Graduate Center.

Excerpts from Fellows’ Spring 2015 Journals

For PhD-bound undergraduates, it is of critical importance to establish strong mentoring relationships with faculty members. Two first semester Fellows describe their experiences.

Joel Engelman (Psychology). With my mentor, Dr. Glen Milstein, I have begun to research the psychological impacts on individuals who have experienced the process of leaving insular religious communities of their upbringing to join the wider general society. Dr. Milstein expeditiously advised me to choose one specific population to narrow the research. We chose the Hasidic/Haredi community, which is the population I am most familiar with, having been raised in that environment. When we began discussing the research project, we expected to be able to carry out the study through the application of existent immigration psychology paradigms to our population. However, we soon realized that although the existent immigration paradigms are extremely helpful in guiding the theoretical design of our study, the ex-Haredi population has important divergent material and psychological characteristic differences, which the paradigms do not address. Additionally, our population of interest has only been scarcely researched, which means that we will have to design and adapt our own measures for the research. Creating truly original research on a population that has not yet been researched is both exhilarating and unsettling. However, Dr. Milstein has been firm in his guidance and encouragement, which has made the task much less daunting. I appreciate Dr. Milstein’s flexibility with his time and generosity in spending many hours brainstorming possible directions and research designs. Working with him has been extraordinarily stimulating.

Sasha Whittaker (Art History). One of my most exciting and rewarding fellowship projects was assisting Professor Ellen Handy with her research on pre-Revolutionary and Soviet-era Russian photography. We set aside one day during spring break to meet at the New York Public Library to view its collection of Russian photography from these eras. This was my first time at the NYPL’s Photography Study Center, and I was thrilled to become familiar with the Center’s rich resources. My task was to translate the image captions from Russian into English for Professor Handy, a task that made me aware of my limitations. I struggled to decipher the handwriting as well as to find the best translations. I also realized that I bring strong opinions and preconceptions to understanding images of the Stalinist era based on my family’s stories about the hardships under Stalin. Professor Handy challenged me to become aware of these preconceptions and to remain open to seeing complex and often contradictory interpretations that undermine the idea of a single narrative about life under Stalin.

Fellows benefit from delivering research papers at our Fellowship’s spring research conference and at other conferences off campus. Three Fellows discuss their experiences.

Wendyliz Martinez (English). During the spring, I presented my paper - “Y Tu Abuela A’onde Eta: Junot Díaz...
toward a Creole Aesthetic” - at the New York African Studies Association’s (NYASA) 40th annual conference in Albany and the MMUF New York regional conference at Barnard College. My paper, which focuses on Junot Diaz’s novel *Oscar Wao*, posits that there are three elements within the novel’s creole aesthetic: use of African spirituality, juxtaposition of Spanish and English, and mixing of the genres of magic realism and science fiction. These conferences helped me think about how to make my research engaging and accessible when presented orally and improved my public speaking skills. I also benefited from hearing questions from the audiences. For example, at the NYASA conference, a professor questioned my use of the term “Creole.” His question, which I could not answer in a few minutes, has preoccupied me ever since the conference and has led me to consider religious themes in *Oscar Wao*, which reflect “creolized” religious practices within Dominican culture. At the MMUF conference, one student remarked that parallels between Diaz’s narrative and the Chango myth suggested to him that it would be fruitful for me to consider the theme of masculinity, a topic that I also hope to explore as I revise and expand my analysis.

I also had the rewarding opportunity to participate as a panelist on the Freedom Summer Panel hosted by the National Council of Negro Women. Although we panelists received in advance an outline of issues to discuss, the moderator’s questions were improvised, making it necessary to think quickly on the spot. In addition, we had to cooperate in order to foster an inclusive discussion among the panelists - as well as between the panelists and the audience - that encouraged participants to voice differing perspectives.

Maria Gavrutenko (Biology). I presented the results of my research three times during the spring semester: “Conservation assessment for an endemic Malagasy rodent, *Gymnuromys roberti* (Family Nesomyidae), using ecological niche models and forest cover data.” This gave me a lot of practice tailoring the presentation to different audiences, a skill that should prove invaluable in my academic career. The first presentation, at the CCNY Biology Honors Research Conference, was directed at a general science audience and had to be concise yet specific enough to illuminate the unique results obtained during the study. I delivered the second talk along with my research collaborator to students in a biogeography class taught by my mentor Professor Robert Anderson. The challenge in this case was to modify the presentation to have a teaching value. We focused on grounding the theory underlying conservation biology niche models in very concrete examples, and we used an interactive format that invited student participation; both approaches worked well. By the time I presented my research at our City College Fellowship conference, I had learned to overcome my fear of public speaking and welcomed the challenge to present the material to an audience of non-specialists. This turned out to be a very liberating and enjoyable experience for me. To engage such a broad audience in my research, I felt free to discard the slides that were too technical and methods-heavy, and to add photos and references to other work in the field. After the unbearably detailed and rather boring talks on the topic of niche models that I had heard (or myself delivered) during the semester, preparing this talk for the Fellowship conference made me remember why I got interested in this field of study.

Conor McGlone (English). I attended my first conference outside of the City College campus this semester: NCUR, the annual National Conference of Undergraduate Research, which was held at the University of Washington in Spokane. The invitation to present my research [“Language and Identity in Hamlet ”] at this conference was an incredibly helpful means to anchor myself; it forced me to produce concrete, polished work by a fixed deadline. Furthermore, presenting a paper in the unfamiliar setting of an alien campus before an unfamiliar audience forced me to take a step out of my comfort zone and move closer to the professional sphere of academia. While this first taste of the academic world outside of CCNY was greatly beneficial, I was surprised to find that the majority of the undergraduates who participated were nowhere near as well prepared as I was. This is not to defame NCUR; rather, I wish to note that I discovered how advanced the Fellows here at CCNY are.

After attending NCUR, I really enjoyed this year’s City College Fellowship annual research conference. It felt special to present my paper to friends and fellowship colleagues and also to hear their papers. More than anything, the research conference was a great send off for the graduating Fellows and a great way to finish the semester with some sense of finality, even if there is still much work to be done!

Tamra Lepro (English). Participating as a panelist for both the workshop and round table discussion on applying to graduate school was hugely helpful in allowing me to come to terms with that enormous endeavor. Celebrating the other Fellows’ successes and empathizing with their struggles really helped me to understand that my personal struggle was normal. The best part, though, was being able to answer the ongoing Fellows’ questions and helping them on their own intellectual path and application process.

Gage Williams (Philosophy). The workshop and roundtable discussion on applying to graduate school were perhaps the most important, and the most infor-
mative, events I attended this past semester. Although I have to admit that I felt intimidated by what was being discussed, one thing in particular set my mind at ease: Gabriella Clemente emphasized that this entire journey is about doing what we are passionate about, and that we must not lose sight of this fact. Her words helped me focus not so much on the mundane logistics of the application process but on why I find so much fulfillment in what I do: because it is challenging, and because it forces me to think in new ways. Gabriella spoke directly to my nerves by reminding me that all of this is not about “getting into graduate school” or “securing funding.” This is about pushing myself to learn and experience new ideas, to understand the world in challenging and thoughtful ways, and to engage with the history of philosophical thought in the hope that one day I can contribute to the dialogue. All of the details, while important and demanding of my attention, are not the ultimate goal.

Sophia Monegro (English). In preparing to present my research [at four academic conferences] this semester, I learned to become more aware of the audience and of the different requirements for oral and written presentation. Our workshop on Public Speaking was exceptionally useful in this regard. As we practiced our introductions in preparation for the fellowship’s annual research conference, we gave each another candid feedback about what worked and what needed improvement. The Fellows’ advice helped me to revise my introduction in order to connect strongly with the audience, which boosted my confidence. Thus the fourth time I presented the paper - in the nurturing, comfortable, and inspiring environment of the fellowship community - I delivered by far the best version.

Workshops that feature faculty and alumni Fellows introduce current Fellows to the intellectual and institutional culture as well as to the personal rewards and challenges of academic careers.

Vannessa Velez (History). The panelists at this semester’s “Forum: On Research,” Prof. Adrienne Petty (History) and Prof. Stanley Tangaraj (Anthropology), were truly amazing and inspiring. This meeting came at the perfect time in the semester when I was beginning to feel fatigue and frustration! I learned a lot about these two professors and their research but also about the state of academia. Professor Thangaraj introduced a concept I had never heard of; he described himself and Professor Petty as “activist scholars.” He talked about his work as an anthropologist studying how young South Asian men construct a masculine identity through playing basketball, which sounds incredibly fascinating. He also explained that he chose to study communities in the U.S. rather than in South Asia because he realized his research could potentially improve the social conditions for Muslims and South Asians in the context of the rise of Islamophobia since 9/11. Moreover, he wanted to avoid orientalist tropes that might arise from a Western academic studying the “other.” Professor Petty shared similar stories and experiences as an activist and scholar of the American South who is beginning new research on gentrification in New York City. I was particularly amazed and inspired by her experience collecting oral histories in Georgia earlier in her career. In my eyes, it was very courageous of her to travel to rural communities on her own and ask questions on subjects that could be controversial or taboo. Her presentation encouraged me to think about oral history as a valuable method for future projects but also encouraged me to go where research takes me—even if it goes against the grain. Overall, it was inspiring to learn that academia does not mandate being isolated from the world and that there are many incredible professors who are proud of their activism and encourage young scholars to follow in their steps.

Bilha Njuguna (English). Panelists for the Workshop on Balancing Career and Life were Prof. Carlos Riobo (Foreign Languages) and Lisa Figueroa Jahn (CCNY MMUF alumna and PhD student, Anthropology, CUNY GC). Both are married and raising children in addition to keeping up with their demanding professional schedules. Lisa admitted that it has been a challenge to pursue a doctorate as the mother of a toddler. Initially, she feared that her peers and professors might perceive this as a stigma in an academic milieu that demands absolute immersion and dedication. Only when her daughter fell sick and she had to miss a day of classes did she realize this; but to her relief, her cohort has embraced her and she feels more relaxed and confident about her dual role. Lisa’s statement that “missing a day of grad school is a big deal” stood out to me; it impressed upon me the dedication it takes to be a doctoral student. Prof. Riobo, at the height of his career, spoke candidly of this quest for balance, and both he and Lisa had similar advice to offer: set firm timetables and personal deadlines; try to always be present in the moment; block family or personal time into your schedule. I heard this advice echoed at the MMUF dinner where graduated fellows underscored the need to establish boundaries between professional and personal spheres and to strive for a healthy work-life balance in order to rejuvenate the mind.

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